FINAL DRAFT

PHASE TWO REPORT

BURKE GILMAN TRAIL
CITIZENS ADVISORY GROUP

EVALUATION OF DESIGN SCHEMATICS

OCTOBER 3, 2006

King County

BURKE GILMAN TRAIL REDEVELOPMENT
CITIZENS ADVISORY GROUP ROSTER

Trailside homeowners:
Tim Ahern
Tom French
Dean Peterson
Stuart Strand

Cyclists:
Gary Elmer
Mark Withers

Business representative:
Jeff Weissman

Community members at large:
Kate Comtois
Jon Skamser
Sandy Koppenol

Other trail users:
Alison Starling
Mark Gibbons

Lake Forest Park Parks and Recreation Commission:
Michelle LeMoine

Ex-officio, non-voting Lake Forest Park City Council Member:
Ed Sterner

INTRODUCTION

King County Executive Ron Sims and Lake Forest Park Mayor Dave Hutchinson jointly appointed the Burke Gilman Trail Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) in 2004. The mission of the advisory group is to "provide King County with thoughtful and informed recommendations on issues related to the proposed redevelopment of the Burke-Gilman Trail through Lake Forest Park." The first meeting of the group was convened in November 2004, and the group met five times in 2005.

The primary focus of the group's work in 2005 was on a Trail Redevelopment Study led by the landscape architect firm of Atelier. This study evaluated the two miles of the Burke Gilman Trail from 145th Street to Log Boom Park, and included recommendations for how the trail can be redesigned and rebuilt to provide for the safety of all users, as well as adjoining homeowners. The CAG was engaged in every aspect of background and analysis related to the proposed trail design, reviewing reports from environmental, geotechnical, drainage, transportation, and arboreal experts. Over the course of their 2005 meetings, the CAG learned a great deal about these various aspects of trail design, and, in turn, were able to share their perspectives on both trail usage and community impacts with the design team.

In February 2006, the CAG issued its *Phase One Report*, which included the Group's comments and recommendations related to the Atelier Study. The CAG then turned its attention to the more detailed design of the trail, which has been led by the landscape architecture firm MacLeod Reckord. After the issuance of its February report, the Group met four times between March and August 2006 to provide advice and recommendations related to the trail design schematics. This ***Phase Two Report*** summarizes those recommendations.

The information and guidance provided by the CAG in this report will be used to shape the more detailed design work to come. MacLeod Reckord will use the recommendations to review and refine to a 60% design level. The CAG will have the opportunity to review these 60% designs, and that review, in turn, will be used to shape and finetune the 90% designs.

The Citizens Advisory Group is composed of fourteen members. Ed Sterner, a Lake Forest Park City Councilmember, serves in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity. The other thirteen voting members represent interests as follows: four are trailside homeowners, two represent trail cyclists, two represent other trail users, one is a Lake Forest Park business representative, one represents parks and recreation interests, and three are community members at large from Lake Forest Park.

In addition to the ongoing participation of the Citizens Advisory Group, the project has benefited in 2006 from the comments shared by trailside homeowners at two meetings, as well as the comments shared by the general public and trail users at a public meeting. A newsletter was produced and mailed to some 2,000 recipients, and continual updates have been made to the project's website.

OVERARCHING THEME

In framing its response to the Trail Redevelopment Study, the Citizens Advisory Group crafted the following theme:

The Citizens Advisory Group recognizes that the safety of this two-mile stretch of the Burke Gilman Trail could be improved from the perspective of both trail users and adjacent property owners. The Group agrees that improvements are necessary to both enhance safety and to make the trail experience more enjoyable for everyone. The Group is committed to continuing to work with the design team to ensure that the improvements made through redevelopment are rationally designed, and that they attempt to address the needs and concerns of all trail users and adjacent property owners.

SUMMARY OF THE CAG'S DESIGN EVALUATION

The Citizens Advisory Group conducted a thoughtful and thorough debate regarding this phase of the trail design as completed by MacLeod Reckord. In general, the "yes" answers highlighted on the following chart mean that those CAG members endorsed the design. The "no" and "unsure" answers mean that those members either disagreed with the design or continue to have questions about whether or not the goals they previously identified in their *Phase One Report* have been met.

For some design elements there is a clear and decisive endorsement from the Citizens Advisory Group. A majority agreed, for example, that the trail will be widened appropriately, that the trail widening will be done in a reasonable, "middle ground" fashion, that the design speeds have been adhered to, and that the trail redesign will help to improve trail usage behavior, e.g. speeding cyclists. The removal of existing trail stop signs at private driveways and minor intersections was endorsed by a majority of the CAG, and, likewise, a majority said that replacing these trail stop signs with trail yield signs was <u>not</u> an option they could agree with.

Other design elements, however, received a much more mixed response. The CAG had agreed with the Atelier recommendation, for example, that all chicanes and other impediments to trail safety be removed. CAG members sharply disagreed, then, with MacLeod Reckord's proposal to use bollards on the trail. Drainage was another area of divided opinion, with four members "unsure" that the design would, in fact, improve drainage on the trail. Six members were similarly unsure about the degree to which vegetated screening/plantings would be replaced after construction, as well as how this vegetation and privacy concerns would be balanced against the use of public right-of-way for the trail itself. Likewise, the degree to which the design ensures that public land is fully retained and used for the trail was a high area of uncertainty for the CAG. Ten members said they were "unsure" that the design does, in fact, meet this goal.

And, although beyond the scope of the design itself, the Citizens Advisory Group remains concerned about both the enforcement of trail speeds and ongoing trail maintenance, both of which fall under the purview of King County. In addition to some confusion about whether it is Lake Forest Park's or King County's responsibility to enforce speeds, a clear majority of the CAG do not believe that this enforcement is adequate. Trail maintenance has long been a troublesome issue for many in the Lake Forest Park community, and, as indicated by their "no" answers, a strong majority of the CAG say that they still do not see convincing evidence that King County will appropriately maintain the trail in the future.

NEXT STEPS

The trail design will continue to be refined between September-December 2006. Both King County and MacLeod Reckord will consider the views of the Citizens Advisory Group, and the general public, as the design is finalized. The CAG will be apprised as to how their opinions have been used; the final design will be presented to the Group, and members will be able to see where their ideas have been used to change and reshape the design as it has progressed.

The CAG has been invaluable to King County and the City of Lake Forest Park during the design deliberations. County Executive Ron Sims and Mayor Dave Hutchinson greatly appreciate the time, thought, and careful consideration that have characterized both the CAG meetings and the two reports produced by the Group.

Design Elements and Answers

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
1) The Trail will be widened appropriately, ensuring that all users have room to use the trail comfortably and safely.	11	2	
2) The trail will be widened in a way that is a reasonable "middle ground" for trailside homeowners.	11		2
3) Overhead lighting and striping will be installed at all intersections and driveways.	12	1	
4) The design removes trail stop signs at private driveways and minor crossings, and makes necessary stop sign/intersection improvements at key intersections.	11	2	
5) Trail yield signs should replace the trail stop signs at minor crossings and private driveways. Trail users would yield to vehicles at these crossings.	3	9	1
6) The design resolves the question of automated traffic lights at intersections.	12	1	
7) The MacLeod Reckord design presents a viable alternative for the three driveways at NE 151st Street.	7	1	5
8) The design removes all existing chicanes and other impediments that contribute to unsafe conditions.		11	2
9) The MacLeod Reckord design adheres to the design speeds delineated in the Atelier Report.	12		1
10) The design works to affect trail behavior, especially speeding cyclists.	11	2	
11) The design will improve drainage on the trail.	9		4
12) The design will remove/replant vegetation, and, at the same time, protect the privacy of homeowners along the trail.	7		6
13) The design ensures that all land currently under public ownership is maintained to accommodate necessary improvements, including buffering and mitigation measures.	1	2	10
14) The MacLeod Reckord design addresses the concerns, questions, and issues that have been raised by the public since the Atelier Report and the CAG's *Phase One Report* were issued.	8	3	2
15) The trail design has been completed with an appropriate and effective level of public involvement.	8	3	2
16) King County has addressed ongoing issues of trail maintenance.		8	5
17) King County has addressed the enforcement of posted trail speeds.		10	3
18) The trail speed should be posted at 10 mph.	2		
19) The trail speed should be posted at 15 mph.	11		

HOW THE DESIGN WAS EVALUATED

Citizens Advisory Group members used the recommendations they had made in their *Phase One Report* as a "checklist" by which to evaluate the design. A majority of the group had agreed with most of the recommendations outlined in the Atelier Report, and those areas of agreement became the basis for their evaluation of the design. Those areas of agreement should, in fact, be viewed as trail design "goals" established by the Citizens Advisory Group. Through this evaluation process, Group members have indicated whether or not they agree that the design has met those goals.

To begin their evaluation, members individually compared the design against their checklist or set of goals. Using the checklist, members could indicate *yes,* the design had achieved the recommended goal, *no,* the design had not achieved the recommended goal, or *unsure* – indicating that the member was uncertain about whether or not the design had met the stated goal.

After they had completed their checklists, members met in both July and August 2006 to discuss their individual responses and to clarify any remaining concerns/questions they had about each of the goals. After the discussion of each goal, members indicated their final *yes, no* or *unsure* answers. Those "final answers" are summarized in this report, along with the highlights of the discussions.

EVALUATION OF DESIGN ELEMENTS

1) The Trail will be widened appropriately, ensuring that all users have room to use the trail comfortably and safely.

Result: **ELEVEN** members answered **YES** to this question. **TWO** members answered **NO**.

Background and Discussion

- While a majority of members agree that the trail has been widened appropriately, there are still some questions about the three-foot/one-foot widths on either side of the trail. Terry Reckord maintained that this will allow for pedestrians to comfortably walk two abreast, should they want to leave the main trail to allow for passing cyclists, etc. The one-foot width on the other side will enable a single pedestrian to use that side, and also provides a safety area for cyclists.
- The two members answering *no* did so in reference to the fact that eleven members of the CAG were in favor of the 3-12-3 profile presented in the *Phase One Report*. Those answering *no* say that they still have not been given adequate explanation for why this width is not being used anywhere on the trail. If the reduction in width is to lessen impact to adjacent homeowners, then it is a disservice to the majority of regional trail users who are not Lake Forest Park residents. It is completely inappropriate to use public right-of-way for private benefit, particularly when the trail improvements are needed for public safety. Those members reiterate that this section of the trail will not be re-designed for perhaps another 30 years. Safety improvements, such as trail width, should not be limited to the bare minimum required.
- Some members remain concerned about the type of surfacing material that will be used for these side trails. Terry Reckord said that the recommended crushed rock, if maintained properly, is comfortable, safe, and flexible for a wide variety of uses. Some members want to see other options explored, for example, ribbed concrete or other materials that will provide the greatest mobility for the highest number of users.

2) The trail will be widened in a way that is a reasonable "middle ground" for trailside homeowners (e.g. sometimes to the west rather than to the east).

Result: **ELEVEN** members answered **YES** to this question, and **TWO** members were **UNSURE**.

Background and Discussion

- CAG members had in their *Phase One Report* that they wanted the design schematics to reflect a reasonable compromise for trailside homeowners. Most notably, this would mean that the trail would at times be widened to the west rather than to the east. Most members agreed that the design had met this goal,

noting that this is a great opportunity to reduce tensions with property owners by limiting changes on the east side of the trail. They believed that expansion to the west should be pursued, as long as it is not prohibitively expensive to do so. Members further said that it is important to find a balance between privacy, safety, access, and cost.

- Some members continue to be concerned that a wider trail will only allow cyclists to go faster. Other members feel, however, that widening the trail will make it safer for all users.

3) Overhead lighting and striping will be installed at all intersections and driveways.

Result: **TWELVE** members answered **YES** to this question. **ONE** answered **NO**.

Background and Discussion

- There was still some concern that, even with additional lighting, Ballinger Way will not be improved. Traffic engineer Michael Read agreed that the area is shady, and stated that the new lighting will significantly improve visibility, especially for dusk and dawn users.

4) The design removes trail stop signs at private driveways and minor crossings, and makes necessary stop sign/intersection improvements at key intersections.

Result: **ELEVEN** members answered **YES,** indicating that they agreed with this design goal, and that it had been met at this stage of schematic design. **TWO** members said **NO,** indicating that they were in disagreement with this design goal.

Background and Discussion

- One of the most contentious issues of the trail redevelopment project has been the existence of trail stop signs at about seven private driveways and minor crossings on the trail. The Atelier Report had recommended that these trail stop signs be removed, and the majority of CAG members agreed with this recommendation in their *Phase One Report*. The *yes* and *no* opinions recorded at this meeting reiterated the earlier CAG opinions expressed about this issue.

5) Should trail yield signs be used in place of the trail stop signs? Under this recommendation, trail yield signs would be placed at minor crossings and private driveways. Trail users would yield to vehicles at these crossings (there are approximately seven of them in this segment of the trail).

Result: **NINE** members said **NO** to this question. **THREE** members answered **YES**. **ONE** was **UNSURE**.

Background and Discussion

- At their July 18 meeting, CAG members were presented with a proposal from the City of Lake Forest Park, which was that trail yield signs would be installed in place of the trail stop signs currently in place at approximately seven private driveways and minor crossings along the trail. King County and MacLeod Reckord had said that such yield signs would be contrary to both the AASHTO guidelines and standard best engineering practices. In fact, MacLeod Reckord had said that they would not put their professional engineering stamp of approval on the drawings if trail yield signs were included as part of the design.
- A contrasting opinion regarding this proposal was presented at the August 15 CAG meeting. Huitt Zollars (HZ), an architect/engineering firm hired by the City of Lake Forest Park, said that, in their professional opinion, trail yield signs are the best solution for controlling the interaction between trail users and motor vehicles. The HZ representative said that such yield signs are consistent with other areas of the Burke Gilman Trail and that, in fact, cyclists and pedestrians should be required to yield to motorists in these areas. Because the Burke Gilman is a recreational facility, its users should be required to yield to motor vehicles at private driveway crossings.
- A majority of the CAG sharply disagreed with this recommendation. They stated that the Burke Gilman is a public right-of-way, and, as such, its users should have priority over private driveway crossings. One member commented that for laws to be enforceable and accepted by the public, the laws must be reasonable. It is unreasonable and inequitable for the users of the very low traffic private driveways to have right of way over thousands of bicyclists.
- One member pointed out that a private driveway crossing a public right-of-way does not constitute an "intersection" per the MUTCD. Trail yield signs at intersections may be appropriate, whereas trail yield signs at driveways are not.
- Other members, however, felt that this would be a reasonable compromise to what has been a difficult issue. Several cyclists on the CAG said that they rarely encounter vehicles when they ride past these driveways and other crossings, and that they thought the trail yield signs could be helpful in preventing accidents should vehicles and cyclists be in the same place at the same time.

6) The design resolves the question of automated traffic lights at intersections.

Result: **TWELVE** members said **YES** to this question. **ONE** member answered **NO**.

Background and Discussion

- Earlier discussions of the CAG had explored the idea of automated traffic lights at intersections as a way to increase safety between cyclists and vehicles. In its *Phase One Report*, the CAG had recommended that such lights only be installed if other safety measures proved to be ineffective. The answers expressed at this

meeting echoed the earlier CAG opinion. The one dissenting member felt, however, that this potential solution should be thoroughly investigated.

7) The MacLeod Reckord design presents a viable alternative for the three driveways at NE 151st Street.

Result: **SEVEN** members said **YES**. **FIVE** members were **UNSURE**. **ONE** member said **NO**.

Background and Discussion

- This was an element of the Atelier Report that had been problematic for the CAG. They asked that better design alternatives be created for this area. Currently, one homeowner backs out onto the trail in order to leave his driveway. On August 15, Terry Reckord presented a new alternative, describing how the homeowner could back out into the right-of-way instead of onto the trail.
- Those answering *yes* on this question said they were satisfied that MacLeod Reckord had presented a reasonable alternative. Those who were *unsure* continued to have questions about whether or not the alternative would truly prove to be viable after more detailed design analysis had been completed.

8) The design removes all existing chicanes and other impediments that contribute to unsafe conditions.

Result: **ELEVEN** members said **NO**. **TWO** members were **UNSURE**.

Background and Discussion

- The Atelier Report had recommended the removal of all bollards, chicanes, and other impediments to trail use. A majority of CAG members had agreed with this recommendation. The MacLeod Reckord design proposes the use of bollards at intersections, to serve as a warning device to cyclists that they are approaching a crossing. The eleven members voting *no* disagreed with the use of bollards.
- Terry Reckord said he believes bollards are useful to notify trail users that they are entering a different zone, such as an intersection. Bollards can serve to calm trail traffic, in the sense that they channelize and serve as a warning that a crossing is near. Bollards are flexible so emergency vehicles can access the trail. They do, however, require regular maintenance.
- CAG members arguing against bollards said there is ample evidence that bollards break and are hazardous to trail users, especially to cyclists when it is dark and slippery. They said that the second most common accident to cyclists is hitting an obstacle such as a bollard. They believe the bollards should be removed entirely.

9) The MacLeod Reckord design adheres to the design speeds delineated in the Atelier Report.

Result: **TWELVE** members answered **YES**. **ONE** member was **UNSURE**.

Background and Discussion

- The trail design speed has been set at 20 mph which accommodates 85% of all users. This is in accordance with the AASHTO guideline.

10) The design works to affect trail behavior, especially speeding cyclists.

Result: **ELEVEN** members said **YES**. **TWO** members said **NO**.

Background and Discussion

- One of the most-frequently cited issues of concern in this segment of the Burke Gilman Trail is the behavior of cyclists -- those going too fast, those not warning pedestrians of their approach, etc. Over the course of its meetings, the CAG has had a number of discussions about the degree to which trail design can actually serve to influence this behavior.
- Those indicating a *yes* response said that the design team has done as much as possible to affect the behavior of trail users. Of course, it is not always possible to actually control this behavior – that will require additional enforcement, and there appear to be questions regarding whether it is King County's or Lake Forest Park's responsibility to enforce trail speeds. Once the exact number of informational and directional signs have been determined, it will be easier for the Citizens Advisory Group to evaluate the degree to which trail behavior can actually be modified through design and signage.
- Common courtesy should be the ultimate goal. Signs might be posted that ask people to "share the trail."
- In its *Phase One Report*, the CAG had recommended that there should be more places to rest, stop, and move off of the trail. Some members felt that this appeared to have been forgotten in the design schematics. This issue will be reevaluated at the 60% design phase.

11) The design will improve drainage on the trail.

Result: **NINE** members said **YES**. **FOUR** were **UNSURE**.

Background and Discussion

- Drainage has been one of the most important issues in need of improvement through the redevelopment project. Although most members were confident that drainage would be improved by the design, those who said *unsure* were concerned that they had not yet seen the detailed drawings regarding specific improvements.

12) The design will remove/replant vegetation, and, at the same time, protect the privacy of homeowners along the trail.

Result: **SEVEN** members said **YES**. **SIX** members were **UNSURE**.

Background and Discussion

- Given the lack of detailed design drawings, a number of members were *unsure* about the degree to which existing vegetation and fencing would be replanted and replaced. Some members said that vegetation replacement should comply with the same standards of East Lake Sammamish Trail. These standards include:
  - It is to be provided only if conditions dictate (delineated in the guidelines).
  - If it is to be provided, it is to be placed at the perimeter of the right-of-way.
  - If an access road exists between the trail and a house, no fencing will be provided.
- Terry agreed, but said there are a number of qualifying considerations, most notably reasonable cost and accommodation for sight lines. Vegetation will be replaced in-kind where it is possible and appropriate to do so. Vegetation that is replaced will be similar in nature to what is removed, but not necessarily identical.
- The trail construction contractor will be responsible for vegetation maintenance for the first year after construction is complete. After that King County will take on public right-of-way vegetation. Plantings on private property are the responsibility of each homeowner.
- A CAG member said that it is important to preserve views and access wherever possible, in compliance with the Washington State Shorelines Management Act. Terry agreed, but also said that there is a compromise between preserving views and protecting residential privacy.
- One of those answering *unsure* said that privacy screening should take a back seat to improving trail safety.

13) The design ensures that all land currently under public ownership is maintained to accommodate necessary improvements, including buffering and mitigation measures.

Result: **TEN** members said they were **UNSURE** about whether or not this design goal had been achieved. **TWO** members said **NO**. **ONE** member said **YES**.

Background and Discussion

- This has been a key point of discussion from the beginning of the trail redevelopment process. Both the *unsure* and *no* votes are from members who do not believe that the public right-of-way is being fully utilized in the design. They are concerned about the level of encroachment from private homeowners that

has occurred on the public right-of-way. They believe it is unfair to narrow the trail in certain areas to accommodate, or lessen the impact on, these homeowners.

14) The MacLeod Reckord design addresses the concerns, questions, and issues that have been raised by the public since the Atelier Report and the CAG's Phase One Report were issued.

Result: **EIGHT** members said **YES**. **THREE** members said **NO**. **TWO** members were **UNSURE**.

Background and Discussion

- While most members are satisfied that the design team has responded well to questions, concerns, and issues raised, those who were *unsure* or said *no* indicated that they felt that neither property owners nor the general public had been offered adequate opportunity to review and comment on the design.

15) The trail design has been completed with an appropriate and effective level of public involvement.

Result: **EIGHT** members said **YES. THREE** members said **NO. TWO** members were **UNSURE.**

Background and Discussion

- Most members believe that the design has been open to, and has benefited from, a satisfactory level of public involvement. Those answering *no* to this question said that more trail users should have been informed about the project and the public meetings. All city residents, they said, not just those in close proximity to the trail, should have received the newsletter. Other such opinions came from members who did not believe that trailside homeowners had been adequately consulted.
- The point was made that the Burke Gilman is a regional trail; a 2000 survey indicated that the majority of trail users do not live in Lake Forest Park. Therefore, as much as possible should be done to include more regional users in any upcoming public meetings.

16) King County has addressed ongoing issues of trail maintenance.

Result: **EIGHT** members said **NO. FIVE** members were **UNSURE.**

Background and Discussion

- Although not directly related to the design, the issue of ongoing trail maintenance has been a major point of discussion with the CAG throughout their committee process. Members have wanted reassurances that King County has a strong and comprehensive plan in place to maintain the trail. The *no* and

unsure votes indicated a lack of confidence among members that King County will commit the resources and time necessary to fully maintain the trail.

17) King County has addressed the enforcement of posted trail speeds.

Result: **TEN** members said **NO** to this question. **THREE** people were **UNSURE** in response to this question.

Background and Discussion

- Although not directly related to trail design, the enforcement of posted trail speeds has been an issue of significant concern for many trailside homeowners. As indicated by the voting, most CAG members are not confident that these speeds are being adequately enforced, nor that there is a plan in place to enforce those speeds in the future.

18) Should the speed limit be posted at 10 mph or at 15 mph?

Result: **TWO** members said that the trail speeds should be **POSTED AT 10 MILES PER HOUR**. **ELEVEN** members said that the trail speeds should be **POSTED AT 15 MILES PER HOUR**.

Background and Discussion

- Because so many trailside homeowners have been concerned about the posted trail speed for cyclists, MacLeod Reckord had recommended a 10 mph posted speed.
- Most members disagreed with this decision, saying that their typical speed is between 10-15 mph. When they are riding at this speed, or even when they are riding up to 17-18 mph, they do not feel that they are dangerous or a threat to other trail users.

CONCLUSION

The Citizens Advisory Group has worked diligently over the past two years to learn about, review, and comment on the myriad of issues associated with safety and other trail improvements along this two-mile stretch of the Burke Gilman Trail through Lake Forest Park. Group members came to the table with a broad diversity of opinions and perspectives, and the debates about the trail design have been vigorous.

Opinions are more divided at this stage of the design than was evidenced by the CAG's *Phase One Report*. Most often, that has to do with a desire from members to see more detailed, specific plans. For example, more detail is needed before all members will feel that the promised drainage improvements will actually be made. There continue to be concerns that King County will not devote the time and resources necessary to both maintain, and enforce the posted speeds, on the trail. And, there continue to be questions on which jurisdiction (King County or Lake Forest Park) has the ultimate responsibility for maintenance and enforcement. Private encroachment on the public right-of-way is another key issue, and there remain questions about the possible alternative of trail users yielding right-of-way to vehicles crossing at the private driveways and minor crossings.

In contrast, there is strong consensus from the group that the trail is being widened appropriately, that sight lines will be improved, and that the design will accommodate the trail design speed of 20 mph for cyclists.

It is important to note that the Citizen Advisory Group's work is not yet complete. Members will have the opportunity to review and to continue to share their opinions on the design as it is finalized. This is anticipated to occur between September-December 2006.